

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors, Mendocino County

March 20, 2021

RE: Agenda item Cannabis Expansion

There are many reasons to not expand regulations allowing the cultivation of more Cannabis in Mendocino County. Cannabis cultivation has already exceeded the point where it is detrimental to the citizens, natural resources, and environment.

Our beautiful county is being trashed and polluted. Unregulated expansion of this industry is in no way sound, either environmentally or in terms of public safety and does not serve the people or the health and beauty of this county's landscape.

Rangeland can never be returned to its natural, pristine state after these types of abuses as once the ground is disturbed or poisoned, it is difficult and expensive to attempt restoration.

According to a letter drafted by Devon Jones of the Mendocino County Farm Bureau, "The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) does not recognize cannabis as an agricultural commodity which is why the county department of agriculture crop reports can include cannabis as an addendum, but not as part of the crop statistics reported to CDFA and then in turn to USDA. The same can be said for organic designation, federal incentive programs like EQIP and others, and pesticide use under Federal law. Cannabis remains federally illegal, which brings numerous complications into the conversation of comparing cannabis to traditional agriculture. CDFA must be considerate of this federal designation or there could be implications for federal funding provided to the department for various programs. CDFA administers sections of division 10 related to the cultivation of cannabis, but cannabis is not regulated under the Food and Agricultural code like traditional agricultural commodities. Cannabis is not eligible as a qualifying use in the Williamson Act Program, is not privy to the California Marketing Act, the California Seed Law, or nursery licensing, among other things, because it is not a bona fide agricultural commodity."

Who will clean up the trash around these grow sites, legal and illegal, when growers are busted, the cannabis market bottoms out, or growers just walk away? On the rangeland grows, they leave the mess-plastic, toxic herbicides and pesticides, batteries, butane cannisters, propane cannisters, feces, black plastic, drip lines, tin, food and beverage containers, pvc, shacks, clothing, tents, sleeping bags, and roaming guard dogs they turn loose to fend for themselves. It has become dangerous to ride a horse, take a hike, go camping or riding ATVs on private and public lands because a person or family might get shot at if they venture too near a guarded grow. On the town or city grows, there are abandoned hoop-houses, stripped residences, vehicles, campers and trailers, gas cans/barrels, trashy sheds, and any number of other types of refuse left for somebody else to clean up.

The erosion from illegally constructed access roads and stealing water from streams, rivers, and springs has negatively impacted our environment. Most of the State of CA is facing yet another drought year. Take a look at Lake Mendocino when you drive by to verify the lack of rainfall this season. Pumping water and water truck deliveries all spring, summer, and fall have impacted water tables in many communities. A driver is at risk of running into unlicensed drivers and uninsured trucks using tens of

thousands of gallons of fuel that have torn up mountain roads in Mendocino, Trinity, and Humboldt counties. Cannabis growers trespass on private, State, and Federal properties for unpermitted grows. Indoor grows use huge amounts of fossil fuels or electricity for their grow lights and fans-or if solar there will be the issue of solar panel and battery disposal one day- along with the pvc and white and black plastic once the useful life has been exceeded-or the money drops out of the market and the folks move out and leave the rubbish behind. There is noise waste from generators running, light waste from running grow lights all night long, and terrible odor of cannabis during the harvest season. Cannabis growers have driven up the price of property-good for a seller, but not good for young agriculturalists trying to make a legitimate go of expanding their owned or leased properties or educators, medical professionals, tradespeople, and businesspeople moving to rural areas. With the garbage and potential toxic chemicals left behind an abandoned grow, nearby properties will lose significant value in the future.

Look at the criminal element troubles that the 'Emerald Triangle' has now. People are starting to feel unsafe on their own properties with people coming to these counties to rip people off. Law enforcement statistics show increased crime; home invasions, theft, intimidation, car jackings, robberies, rape, assault, missing persons, unsolved murders that all come along with cannabis and the people propagating it, along with other drugs such as methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and a variety of regulated pharmaceuticals such as OxyContin, etc. that tag along.

The entire industry is setting a terrible example for the youth; federally illegal activities that have become known as a legitimate career choice. Or, if you are unwilling to work for a living, arm yourselves with guns and knives and take the packaged product or money from people who worked all season to produce it by whatever force necessary.

It is hard to tell what will happen long term in Mendocino county, but it sure is headed in the wrong direction. Please consider all the reasons NOT to approve moving ahead with Cannabis Ordinances that will continue to encourage bringing all these hazards to agricultural rangeland and other zones. Do you really believe all this cannabis will be legally grown, taxed, sustainable, and used for medicinal purposes? Think again. There is not enough manpower to process permits for 'legal' grows or enforce the provisions of permitted grows and eradicate the illegal grows that are already a blight in Mendocino county. The rubbish, criminal element, and unsightly hoop houses are certain to impact tourism, which seems to be important to the bottom line in Mendocino County.

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